

X  
English 100M

Autobiography  
of  
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## Chapter I-My Father

There once was a little boy who was sent by his parents all the way from Germany to the world's largest city --New York. The enormous metropolis that was and still is the greatest single receiver of immigrants. Traveling by himself, the twelve-year-old, husky, short, and ambitious youth, who had been the first one on and off of the trains and boats since his departure from the old country, now got his ticket for Chicago, where he was to live with an older and already established brother.

After five years the fellow now being just seventeen was completely on his own in more than one way. First of all he was no longer living with his brother, because his young nephews were growing up, and the youth wanted more freedom around his living quarters so that he could obtain more hours of peaceful reading in hopes of going to college in the near future. The once-upon-a-time green-horn had made speedy progress in picking up the language, folkways, and mores of the American people, and in this manner he soon struggled forward using all his abilities plus his pleasing character to reach many desirable ends. By the age of twenty-two, this man, my father, had a growing modern business located on State Street in Chicago. Now he had the foundation of two years of college education behind him, several years of a private, intellectual discussion group, and hours of personal observation of the world we live in and its reactions to various situations. The purchase of a small library made it easier for my father to further his education during his spare time (which he had plenty of, since he was he was not attracted to the superficial, commonplace amusements that most people around his age were). His life was not completely a bed of roses as he at one time thought it was going to be, but many of his business adventures were pulled into the passing national periods of panic or cyclic depressions as some conservatives choose to label it.



These conditions caused the spark of life to be constantly kindled in his days. It made him wage a fifty year battle that made his life and many similar lives interesting and individualistic (if a touch of rugged individualism still commands some social status). As a rule, I think it is permissible for me to say that the environment that molds the character of a father has a distinct and many times permanent effect on the son. Inasmuch as you profit (or lose, possibly) by his teachings and training in general that he obtained as a result of his environment, of course one must consider the somewhat new theory that the part heredity plays in mental determination is very small.

## Chapter II-My Mother

After my father, my mother was the next in importance as far as the influence exerted on me by individuals with whom I came in contact with is concerned. Since my father was about eight years older <sup>than my mother</sup> and was already a man of the world when he married, my mother became a secondary factor in my bringing up. The main ideas, fundamental attitudes, and actions that were taken upon me came from my mother so that I should some day be able to face the treacherous, grinding wheels of the world I was to live in. In fact the care given me (as some say) "spoiled" me and was actually detrimental to my character in certain ways. Although I've been away from home many times, still until several years ago being away was a hardship.

There are thousands of children that are being "spoiled" daily, and, as a rule, one will find this in families where there are only one or two children and each one is given an enormous amount of unnecessary time and energy. When many of these "petted" individuals grow into manhood it will be found that a large portion of them are selfish, nervous, unappreciative, and hard to get along with. I, by no means, declare this rule to be without exceptions nor do I claim that my life has been ruined by this particular type of environment.



Just the opposite reaction occurs when there<sup>are</sup> too many children in the family. John, for example, picks up routines for himself, he must catch on to the methods of arranging this, that, and the next thing. He is left, usually, to an older brother or sister who is, without a doubt, unqualified for child-raising.

My mother was born in Indiana and was one of many children in her family. She, in my opinion, came through the character-scratching walls of her family with only minute and unimportant bruises. Her good, clean background both physically and mentally, has greatly benefited me through the rather strict rules that she held me too (with my father acting as ~~the~~ police force behind her laws). She has been ever-faithful to her two children, and was with her greatly-loved husband nearly every day from the time of their marriage, a quarter of a century ago, until his dying day, which was just two years ago. As I say, they were inseparable companions, but this isn't as good a situation as it may seem to be. For a man and his spouse to be together day after day is all right until one member is called to the possible world beyond then the great difficulty arises in the life of the unfortunate member that is left to forge on and <sup>to</sup> struggle alone. Even if economically satisfied, to go on "living and lacking" the companionship of a loved one is like residing in a region where the sun rarely peeps from behind the clouds, and where there is a permanent prevalence of dullness and gloominess.

Kindness in my mother's case is probably undesirable because she can not afford to be a free and easy giver. She is always among the first ones to help a down and out person, having little regard for the capacity of her philanthropy. My mother's fine home training and favorable environment turned out to be a seemingly great advantage for me. All of her desirable traits were passed on to me, and I'm sure, as far as I'm able to judge at this time, the good characteristics way over balance the bad. I try to be as unprejudiced as humanly possible on these observations.



## Chapter III-My Childhood

The first thing that makes a strong impression on one's mind, as a rule, becomes the oldest recording in the memory cells of the brain.

Three months after the signing of the Armistice my parents took me to witness a gigantic Chicago homecoming parade in which I heard and saw at least ten large bands that were playing inspiring and blood stimulating war tunes as they rhythmically marched down the avenue. Every telephone pole, every lamp post, and every available street sign was neatly covered with the stars and stripes as were the street cars and the old fashioned automobiles. When my father picked me up (being only four years old and still very light), and put me on his broad shoulders I was able to obtain an extensive bird's-eye-view of the thousands of spectators who lined both sides of the street waving flags and banners, and whistling and cheering to their heart's content. It seemed as though the yelling would cease only with the expiration of the slowly fading-out voices.

I too was carried away by the glamorous patriotic atmosphere of the day. I too like most of the on lookers in this day and age, didn't realize what the homecoming soldiers had done abroad and who had sent them. Several years after this interesting scene I was still playing with my toy soldiers, and the "dirty old German" toy men always lost my self-made and self-controlled battles. Yes, the amalgamated propaganda of the propagandizing interests got the best of me then.

I had a little boy friend who used to live next door to me and would come in to help me move my toys around on the lines of the carpet. He had dark hair, thin lips, big, bulging, black eyes, and a puny little body. Berny (as I called him) was a very obliging pal, and when he came over my whole day was at once brightened up because I knew that with his cooperation a delightful time would be had by both of us. After having <sup>him</sup> for a playmate for my first five years we moved away from this neighborhood to Oak Park, a western



suburb of Chicago. Here my father built a nine room home in which our family spent many happy years. It has always been very easy for me to remember the day we entered our new grey stucco home because it was on April 15, my father's birthday. After a few weeks we planted eight fruit trees, gooseberry bushes, grape and currant vines, and dozens of flower plants in our front and back yards. I became interested in the workings of nature when I watched the daily progress that was made by each and every growing object on our grounds. The unusual sprout of the strawberry vines and the slow development of the peony bud and flower played an important part in helping to imbed in me a permanent desire to be close to nature's wonders.

Since my birthday falls in March and the school term begins at the end of January, I had to remain in kindergarden until the following fall when my mother started me in the first grade at a large grammar school on the then far west side of Chicago. I later went to a comparatively small school in Oak Park and this was advantageous since this playground wasn't one big mass of running and jumping children as was the unfortunate case in the ever over crowded Chicago schools.

In the sixth grade we had a young, pretty, and attractive teacher by the name of Bostwick who was called "Bossy" by the class for short. This nickname, of course, was always whispered for fear that she might hear it and make the users stay "nights" to write out "I won't say it again" about five hundred times on the blackboards.

One afternoon ~~when~~ we were in the cloak room which was formed by a thick partition, that set a small space off from the classroom. <sup>Bossy</sup> Since she called me from the front entrance, <sup>and</sup> I ducked around through the back entrance into the school room hoping that I wouldn't be seen. Just my luck, I thought, she heard a hurried scuffle and suspected my presence. I was wishing that she would think that I'd gone home already, but with with a



burning and treacherous look on her face, she dogged back and forth until it was too obvious that I was seen. With my heart in mouth I placed myself at her mercy. "God save me," I prayed to myself.

Upon another occasion several members of our class dared a certain nervy individual by the name of Wantz, who had a dead rat at home, to bring it and put it on the teachers desk. The tall, lanky, fool took up the dare and on the following day the news about the placing of the rat in Bossy's drawer was whispered from mouth to mouth. At last the air became tense as the time for her entrance grew nearer. As the knob on the door turned all murmuring ceased instantly. But no sharp, high-heeled shoe steps were heard, only very light tappings moved through the cloak room; paused to probably hang a hat on a hook, then from the back entrance to the school room came timid Jack Allen who was late as usual. After a few seconds of unexpected relaxation Bossy entered and seemed puzzled to find such an unusual quiet state prevailing (although she soon found out the reason). Needing a pencil Bossy opened her drawer and let out a ear-piercing yell that made our nerves stand on edges for the minute. She commanded the person that "did the job" to come forward and remove the dead animal. After a short, highly heated lecture the victim hesitantly turned himself over for this supposedly drastic punishment, which was administered by sending him home with a note from the school principle. He never touched a rat again he told me some years later.

The next semester our class was put under the strict and sharp-eyed Miss Kilborn whom we nick-named "Killjoy", which I think fitted her like a glove. I thought that she was the meanest person on the faculty since her face and heart seemed to be made of cast iron and a smile on her white, piercing phsyogomy came as often as snow in June.

One week after graduating from grammar school our family drove to a



small lake in northern Illinois to visit some friends who had a cottage there. In the late afternoon when swimming in the lake I was introduced to Berny, the little tot with whom I played war ~~with~~ just ten years previous to this meeting. This was the first time I had seen him in all these years and how big he was now. His hair was still black, his eyes were even larger, and his lips were still thin, although he no longer had a frail, puny body, but his physique was unusually well developed. The fact that he wore a life savers emblem ~~proved~~ that its owner had good strength to display.

Three days after this coincident my father sent me to a Y.M.C.A. camp in northern Michigan where I remained for eight weeks. There were twenty cabins in the camp with ~~twenty~~ <sup>seven</sup> boys and a "leader" in each. The leader was an older fellow who was usually a junior or senior in high school, and who also was a very good athlete.

In order to further cleanliness in the cabins a contest was held every summer in which the boys obtaining the greatest number of daily credit-points from the cabin grader, would win a four day canoe trip.

Since we had a very ambitious bunch of campers in our little group, we gathered the largest total of points by the end of the seventh week, and we were bestowed with the pleasure of making the trip.

Early in the morning after the day of the announcement of our victory we loaded our three canoes and shoved off. I pulled the lucky number when drawing to see who would go with the leader, who was an expert swimmer and an unusually pleasing personality. He was the type of individual that appealed to me even although he made me do deeds that I considered very unfavorable such as running errands and helping to clean up the campus. I guess he possessed the technique of getting things done and still keeping the friendly attitude before our minds. Our canoe (with only the two of us in it) was to carry most of the provisions and was to lead the way across the lakes and rivers (which are all linked together in



this part of Michigan). The second and third canoes were each to contain three members of our party.

After paddling almost all day in sunshine, hail, and rain we stopped to cook our supper and to set up our sleeping quarters for the night. Since our matches were wet, two boys were sent to a near-by farm house where some dry ones were secured. When we reached (what seemed to be) a starvation point in our diet, the meal was finally done and soon was down. To finish the first twenty-four hours of the trip completely, we greeted unenthusiastically a refreshing heavy down pour of rain that refreshed us at a very poor time. The storm gave it to us in the neck both literally and figuratively resulting in our having to sleep with our heads sheltered not by the wished for stars, but by the insides of damp and smelly canoes.

It was just afternoon on the following day when the leader, with whom I was canoeing, decided that we would stop along side of a high bank and wait for the other two canoes to come down the river. While waiting the leader and I brought some provisions on shore in preparation for lunch. Ten minutes later the second group of fellows arrived and were signalled to come ashore for lunch and rest. The five of us were becoming worried after waiting almost a half an hour for the three fellows in the third canoe. Suddenly someone yelled out, "Here comes a paddle floating down the river." At this our leader raced over to a canoe, paddled down stream with all his strength plus that of the current and overtook the paddle. On it three words were found engraved. They were "Safe on island". This was a shock and a relief to all of us who had already pictured worse things than that happen to our lost friends.

Our leader and the best swimmer in our party jumped into the smallest and fastest canoe and sped up the river. When they finally approached the little island (as we heard later) they found one of the three clinging to a cable that was stretched across the river hanging about a foot above the



water at the center of the stream. The suffering canoeist had cramps in both legs and was thus unable to swim. The other two fellows were patiently waiting for help on the thick brush, covered island and were, as one would expect, overjoyed to see their rescuers coming. All of us returned to the camp two days later ~~with all of us returned to the camp two days later~~ with all our arms and legs with us, fortunately, people said.

#### Chapter IV-High School and College.

My four high school years went like a flash of lightning ~~just like~~ <sup>as</sup> the weeks and months seem to go today. I spent my first three years at Oak Park High in Illinois, and the last year at Cleveland Heights High in Ohio.

The greatest problem of mine that has existed for the last three or ~~for~~ years and most unfortunately still remains unsolved, is the question of my future trade, profession or what not. I have, so far, vicariously flown a plane, owned a bank, taught a class, led an orchestra, shot news reel, and blasted ideas into the minds of jurors. What have I decided upon? Nothing. My interests are now leaning toward one field of work and that is public service of some kind. Whether it be public law, social work, labor organization, or promotion of peace I know not.

There was a time when I thought differently about college students. Last fall I came to Miami and discovered that I had been disillusioned when I began to look for serious boys and girls that were here to study, and when I ~~instead~~ found a bunch of (the average of course) coke guzzlers and cigarette fiends. Now I think of them as plainly overgrown high school children here for a merry-go-round ride on the (as in many cases) hard earned money of their parents.

I am here with the idea of furthering my education ~~as~~ that I will be able to discriminate, to weigh, to verify, and to be sure of what I finally conclude--as human beings can be. Today, after a year of closer observation of the movements of the world I can look back several years into my history



and I'm able to see what foolish conclusions I made on so many occasions. I see that my athorities weren't real athorities but just propagandists fighting their own battles. My ideas were formed on quick and unsound evidence with little weighing of the issues on my part. I left all the real reasoning to the so-called big shots whowere reasoning for themselves, although every once in a while some person with unselfish philosophy would get control of me(mentally), and he could pour in his convincing views. Of course I learnt enough so that I didn't take a milkman's advice about the price of coffins in Porto Rico because that much I knew. In this respect I possibly unduly compliment myself, but it is my honest opinion that I became a daubter and critical ~~mind~~-minded individual before most of my companions. I don't mean to insinuate that my acquaintences would hold fast to a Broom pushers advice on the tarrif problem, but I do find that if and when they are critical(as a rule) they do so only to be critical because to question, they think, is a sure sign of the educated class. No, it instead displays the educated ass, and there are pleanty of this type of person around. In the course of this last year I realized that college isn't all that it is cracked up to be. One probably hears the same or similar reactionary attitudes from many students and many times it has an entirely diferent <sup>significance</sup> ~~meaning~~. There are those whom I have met that claim that they thought things aren't anywhere ~~like~~ like in the pictures. The girls aren't as beautiful, the team isn't very good, etc. I see that there <sup>is</sup> ~~a~~ few here to learn after making a microscopic test of a cross-section of the student body.

When I was younger(and less romantic) I didn't believe in mixing social affairs with either work or play. My ideas have overcome a great change. Today I think it is absolutely essential in a student's life for the simple reason that it helps to round out his character and broaden his knowledge. Let me discribe how Miami struck me this spring one evening



when I was coming home alone. The scene is almost undiscribable. At night the alluring light of the moon, the cool breezes that so lazily floated over the tree-covered campus filled the hearts of numerous romantic lovers with that, once-in-a-life-time probably illusionistic, mutual affection. Where a trespasser might see two shadows sitting, strolling, or attempting to say au revoir, he sites just one, as even a mere ray of the ~~dull~~ (but romance inspiring) heavenly light is not permitted to go twixt the two indulging individuals. Thus progreseth a bud-season evening in good ol' Oxford.

The university provides the environment, the boy and the girl, and the moon ignites the sence of affection. Future husbands meet their future ~~wives~~ wives, future professors and teachers meet their future colleagues, and future lawyers and business men meet their some-day-to-be enemies and cut-throat competitors. A university if it accomplishes nothing else, it at least attempts to act as the guide post at the cross-roads. It is bringing me from a cloudy region to a clearer region where I can see a bit of sunshine and the sign posts at the cross-roads are coming within the range of human visibility. I soon will make my final choice as to my aimed-at destination. Not only the teachers have influenced me to change some ways, manners, and ideas but it is due to the whole environment of the college. I am thankful that that I realize the decline in the ~~unde-~~ serving, rather high social status that is given to a college man. It is better to understand now that going to college doesn't make one educated, and that it only helps a person desiring an education to secure it.

In conclusion I wish to state that my destiny, as I see it now, depends upon both the occupation that I select and the future condition of our country. If, per chance, I pick law and the Russian system moves in (which seems improbable today) then ~~it~~ <sup>the law</sup> would be abolished <sup>as a profession</sup>. Practically any field a modern youth enters is going to be largely conditioned by our future social order. So-- I'll gamble with life as a conservative better at the



race tracks gambles on horses. He looks over the lists, picks out the probable winners, and with the use of predictions he draws the horse. I have looked over life's long list, I too have picked a few probable winners, and now to weigh the predictions for a first place, and then to spend my four years of college education on it.

G.S.S. - May, 1934.